How climate change is affecting the Alps and what you can do about it

mieux donner.

This document is the companion guide to a fold out climate map created by Mieux Donner, a non-profit founded in the Chamonix Valley in the heart of the French Alps. Our aim is to help people transform their climate concern into meaningful action. The scale of the climate crisis can feel overwhelming, but each of us has the power to make a difference.

By highlighting practical, impactful steps we can all take, this guide aims to inspire hope, empower action, and show that, together, we can rise to the challenge and protect the landscapes we love for the future.

If you have any questions about this guide, or you would like to find out more about how to amplify your impact for the climate, don't hesitate to visit our website, or reach out to us.

Visit our website

Get in touch: info@mieuxdonner.org

Written by Jennifer Stretton, *International Mountain Leader and Co-founder of Mieux Donner, and designed by* Martina Pepiciello

Note: This guide was last updated in July 2025 - for the most up to date version of the guide visit this link.

A VERY SHORT SUMMARY

If you don't have time to read this full guide, here's a VERY short summary and links to parts you might want to read:

Reasons for hope

Although global carbon emissions are still rising, per capita emissions peaked over a decade ago. ➔ READ MORE

We have a habit of underestimating how quickly things can change - battery and solar technology are good examples of rapid progress. ➔ READ MORE

The impact of climate change

Past climate change was driven primarily by changes in the earth's orbit. Recent climate change is due to CO_2 increase since the industrial revolution.
➔ READ MORE

Current policies and targets put us on track for over 2°C of warming by 2100, so more ambitious action is urgently needed.
➔ READ MORE

The impact of climate change is especially evident in the Alps - Since 1900, Alpine glaciers have lost roughly half their volume. ➔ READ MORE

Why aren't people acting?

Our cognitive biases make us think people don't care, leading to demotivation. ➔ READ MORE

The media focuses too much on the catastrophic consequences of climate change and not on solutions. ➔ READ MORE

There is a perception gap between which actions we think are effective at reducing our carbon footprint and which actions truly make a difference. ➔ READ MORE

The most effective things you can do

Top three lifestyle changes: going car free, reducing meat intake and not flying. ➔ READ MORE

Donating to effective climate charities will increase your impact. ➔ READ MORE

Take action now to make a difference. ➔ READ MORE

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Jen Stretton

International Mountain Leader and Co-founder of Mieux Donner

As a mountain leader working in wild, remote places from the Alps to the Arctic, I've spent years on the front lines of climate change. Every summer, I watch the glaciers retreat further. And last winter in Lapland, it rained in January for the first time—a month when temperatures should be closer to -20°C.

Like many in the outdoor community, I've struggled to reconcile my love for mountain sports with their impact on the climate and the fragile landscapes we cherish. I've also felt frustrated by the lack of clear answers to the question: "What can we, as individuals, actually do about climate change?"

Despite the constant bad news, there are real, powerful actions we can all take, both as individuals and as a community. It's not too late to act and the more we do now, the better chance we have of staving off the worst consequences of climate change.

I founded Mieux Donner to help bridge the gap between concern and action—to make the latest climate science accessible to those who want to make a real difference, grounded in evidence. This guide is for outdoor lovers who want to be part of the solution. If we want a future where the landscapes we love to work and play in still exist, we must step up today.

Tanya Perret
International Mountain Leader and Founder of Live Breathe Hike

Live Breathe Hike's commitment to effective climate action

Friends of LBH,

I started Live Breathe Hike based out of a passion to take people on mountainous journeys that would offer a transformative experience and deep connection with the natural environment. Since beginning to guide at the age of 21, I have witnessed a stark and noticeable change in our landscape as a result of climate change. From extreme flooding & erosion in Pakistan, witnessing the permafrost layer disappear in Nepal, to shrinking glaciers in the Alps & our local French ski domain on the brink of closure.

Despite the constant bad news, there are real, powerful actions we can all take, both as individuals and as a community. It's not too late to act and the more we do now, the better chance we have of staving off the worst consequences of climate change.

Live Breathe Hike has partnered with Mieux Donner to help bridge the gap between concern and action which instantly felt 100% logical—to make the latest climate science accessible to those who want to make a real difference, grounded in evidence. We have committed to effective climate donations from every trip booked. This guide is for outdoor lovers who want to be part of the solution.

Visit Live Breathe Hike's website

live breathe hike

A VERY SHORT SUMMARY

PART 1: REASONS FOR HOPE

PART 2: THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

PART 3: WHY AREN'T PEOPLE ACTING?

PART 4: TOP THREE MOST EFFECTIVE LIFESTYLE CHANGES

PART 5: CLIMATE DONATIONS

PART 6: TAKE ACTION NOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

PART 7: SUPPORT FOR COMPANIES

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Note: The data from this section of our guide is taken from Hannah Ritchie's excellent book, *Not the End of the World*, published in 2024.

Our perception of climate change is extremely negative

Very few people know that emissions are falling. To illustrate this, the climate scientist Jonathan Foley polled his followers on Twitter [now X]. He asked what had happened to emissions in the US over the past 15 years. Had they:

a) Increased by more than 20%

b) Increased by 10%

c) Stayed the same

d) Fallen by 20%

Thousands of people answered.
Two-thirds of people picked a) or b). Just 19% picked the correct answer d). No wonder people think we're screwed.

The reality is more hopeful

- ➔ Although global carbon emissions are still rising, per capita emissions peaked over a decade ago.

- In 1900, almost all of the UK's energy came from coal; today, coal accounts for less than 2% of the UK's electricity generation.
- It's possible to reach peak global carbon emissions during the 2020s.
- Low-income countries have the chance to leapfrog directly to cleaner, more sustainable energy systems.

We have a habit of underestimating how quickly things can change

When was the last time you heard about the ozone layer? Or acid rain? These were problems that dominated the headlines in the 1980s and 90s. Why don't we hear about them now? Because we solved them! Countries came together, governments implemented policies, and it actually worked. The world's emissions of ozone-depleting gases fell by more than 99 percent. In Europe and North America,

emissions of sulphur dioxide—which causes acid rain—fell by more than 85 percent. — *Hannah Ritchie*

In the past, most of us, including experts, have been too pessimistic about the potential of renewable energy.

Between 2009 and 2019, solar photovoltaic and wind energy went from being the most expensive to the least expensive sources of electricity.

- The cost of solar dropped by **89%**.
- The cost of onshore wind dropped by **70%**.
- Today, both are cheaper than coal.

Battery technology has also become dramatically more affordable:

- A Tesla car battery now costs around **$12,000**.
- A Nissan Leaf battery is about **$6,000**.
- In the 1990s, similar batteries would have cost **$500,000 to $1 million**.

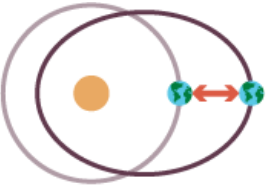
OUR CHANGING CLIMATE

SUMMARY

- **Changes in Earth's orbit have altered the climate before, but are too slow to cause recent warming.**
- **Recent climate change is due to CO_2 increase since the industrial revolution.**
- **The current rate of climate change is alarming because it outpaces the ability of humans and wildlife to adapt.**
- **Current policies and targets put us on track for over 2°C of warming by 2100, so more ambitious action is urgently needed.**

What drove climate change in the past?

In the last 800,000 years, there have been eight cycles of ice ages and warmer periods, with the end of the last ice age about 11,700 years ago. Most of these climate changes were attributed to volcanic activity and very small variations in Earth's orbit called "Milankovitch cycles" that change the amount of solar energy our planet receives [NASA, 2020].



changes in eccentricity
(orbit shape)
100,000 year cycle

precession of axis
(wobble)
26,000 year cycle

changes in obliquity
(tilt)
41,000 year cycle

Milankovitch cycles are slow, predictable changes in Earth's orbit and tilt that alter how much sunlight reaches different parts of the planet, especially in the northern hemisphere during summer. These changes—eccentricity (shape of orbit), obliquity (tilt), and precession (wobble)—affect the distribution of solar energy over tens to hundreds of thousands of years, triggering the growth or melting of ice sheets.

Milankovitch developed a mathematical model showing how these cycles align with past Ice Ages, a theory now widely supported by paleoclimatic data such as ice cores, tree rings and sediment cores.

What's driving climate change today?

While past climate shifts were driven by natural factors such as Milankovitch cycles and volcanoes, today's rapid warming is primarily caused by greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels.

How do we know that current climate change isn't part of the "natural cycle"?

1. Speed of change

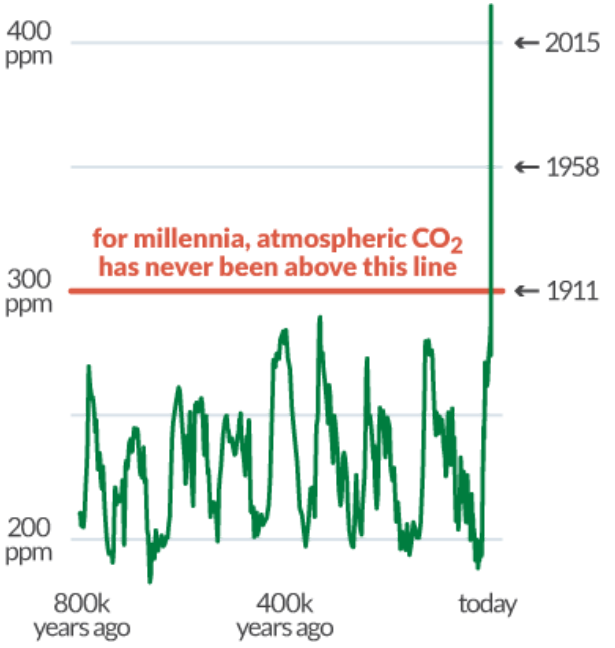
The key difference between now and climate change in the past is the rate of change. After previous glacial periods (cold phases where ice sheets covered much of northern Europe), the Earth warmed at a rate of between 4 and 7°C over 5,000 to 10,000 years [NASA; Clark et al., 2016]. Today, though, we have seen more than 1°C of warming over the past 160 years. Most of this warming has taken place in the last 50 years.

The current rate of climate change is alarming because it outpaces the ability of humans and wildlife to adapt, leading to serious ecological disruption and significant economic consequences.

2. CO_2 concentrations

Although CO_2 has increased naturally before, such as during volcanic events linked to mass extinctions, today's rise is

caused by human activity which has produced a far greater proportion of CO_2 in our atmosphere. Since the onset of the industrial revolution, human activities have raised atmospheric CO_2 by 50%. This human-induced rise is greater than the natural increase observed at the end of the last ice age 20,000 years ago [NASA, 2025].



Data Source: *NASA - Carbon dioxide measurements*

3. Glacial cycles

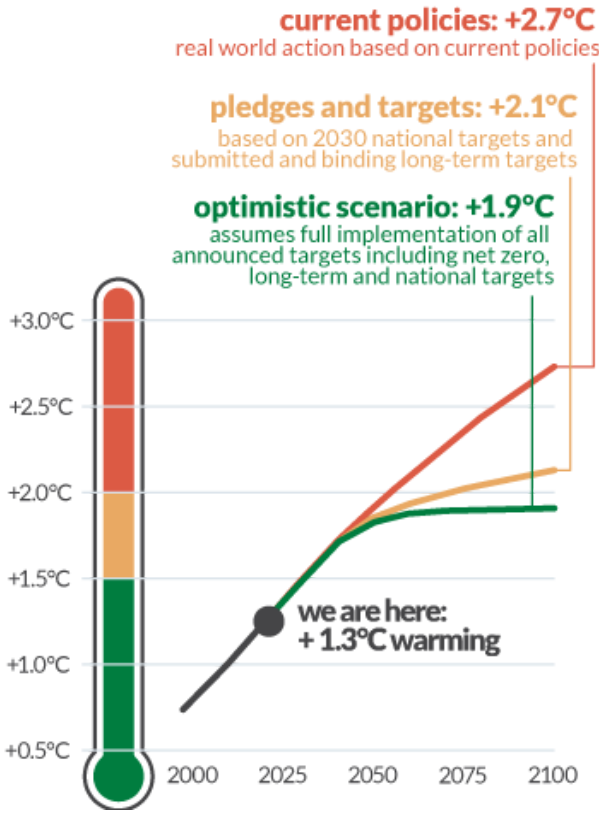
Earth is currently in an interglacial period (a period of milder climate between Ice Ages). The Earth's current orbital positions within the Milankovitch cycles predict that our planet should be cooling, not warming, continuing a long-term cooling trend that began 6,000 years ago [NASA, 2020].

Climate predictions for the future

The ten hottest years in the 174-year climate record have all occurred within the last decade (2014 to 2023) [Climate.gov, 2024].

In the Paris Agreement, nations around the world committed to the goal of keeping the global average temperature rise "well below 2°C" while also "pursuing efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C."

The graph on the next page, from Climate Action Tracker, shows expected temperature rises for 2100 under different scenarios.



Data source: [Climate Action Tracker]

Why is limiting warming to 1.5°C important and is it too late?

➔ 1.5°C of warming was chosen as the target to stay under at the [Paris Agreement] because under this

threshold many of the deadliest effects of climate change are reduced.

- In February 2024, it was confirmed that the 1.5°C threshold of global warming had been breached for a full 12 months for the first time.

- It isn't too late to keep warming under 1.5°C but without urgent, globally coordinated efforts to rapidly reduce emissions and transform economies, staying under 1.5°C will likely slip out of reach [IPCC].

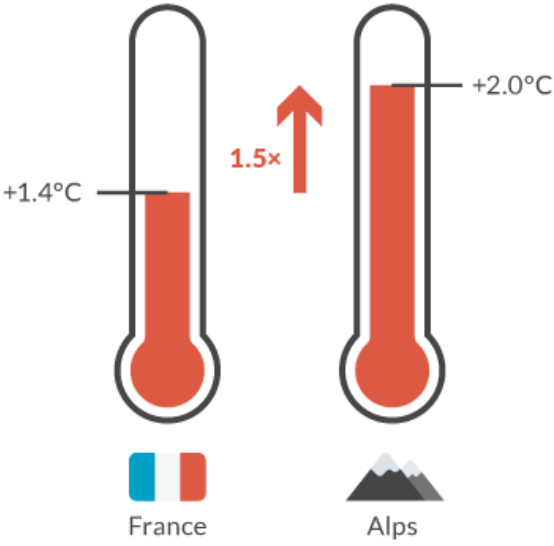
CASE STUDY: HOW CLIMATE CHANGE IS AFFECTING THE ALPS

SUMMARY

- → The Alps are warming twice as fast as the global average.
- → Since 1900, Alpine glaciers have lost half of their volume and the rate of retreat is accelerating.
- → The duration of snow cover in the Alps is 36 days shorter than the long term average.
- → Alpine species are struggling to keep pace with the rapid rate of change and are becoming locally extinct.
- → Many classic climbs in the Alps are now too dangerous to climb or have completely collapsed due to permafrost melt.

Temperature Increases

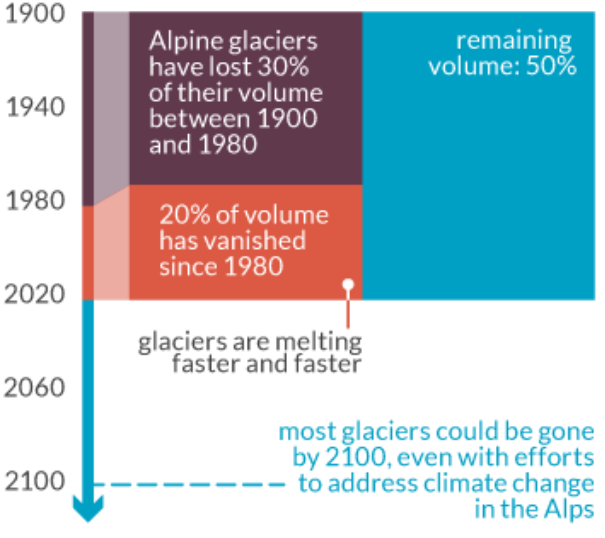
Over the 20th century, temperatures in France have increased by 1.4°C. However, in the European Alps, this rise has been even more significant, with temperatures climbing by 2°C [CREA]. This warming is particularly pronounced in mountainous areas due to the melting of snow cover, which exposes darker rock surfaces that absorb more heat from the sun.



Data source: Climate change and its impact on the Alps (CREA)

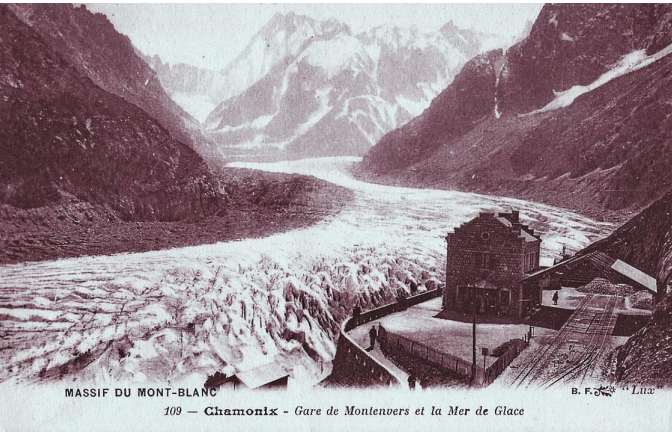
Glacial Retreat

Since 1900, Alpine glaciers have lost about half their volume and the rate of retreat is accelerating—20% of their volume has vanished since 1980 [Deutche Welle, 2017]. Even with significant efforts to address climate change in the Alps, projections suggest that most glaciers could be gone by 2100 [European Geosciences Union, 2019]. This is worrying because glaciers act as crucial reservoirs of freshwater, holding more water than all lakes, soils, rivers, and plants combined.



Glaciers regulate water flow by storing it during colder, wetter months and releasing it during the hotter, drier summer periods. The loss of glaciers will lead to reduced river flows and potentially dry up small streams, impacting Alpine ecosystems and agriculture.

Dairy cows need around 100 litres of water a day—and in recent years, that water has sometimes had to be delivered to Alpine pastures by truck or even helicopter. It's a stark sign that the long-term sustainability of this traditional way of life is under serious pressure.



Mer de Glace before 1914 – *Public domain image*

Mer de Glace in 2023 – *Photo by urtimud.89*

In 1880, when the Montenvers Hotel was built at the top of the railway, guests could step right out of the hotel and onto the glacier with ease. Fast forward to today, and the Mer de Glace is retreating at a staggering rate of 4 metres each year. The situation has worsened so dramatically that a new gondola was constructed in 2023 to avoid the gruelling descent down 550 steps to reach the glacier.

Jon Morgan

IFMGA Guide and
President of the BMG

In the 22 years since I qualified as a guide the changes have been enormous, though this timeframe is barely a millisecond on a geological timescale.

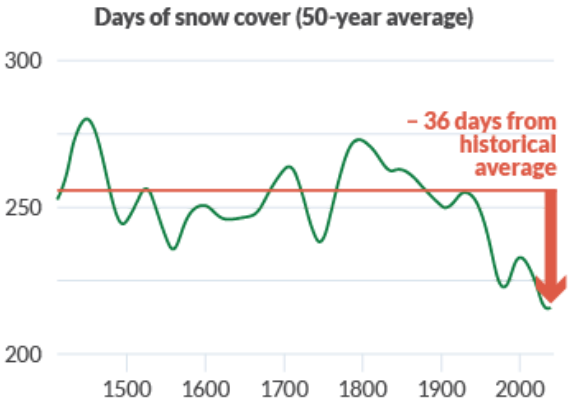
I remember continuous ice on the Argentière Glacier extending almost down to the Crèmerie ice climbing. I remember the tongue of the Mer de Glace extending so far down that you barely needed to

ascend off it to the Mottets Buvette, if you're skiing the Vallée Blanche all the way to Chamonix. Not that you can do that very often any more.

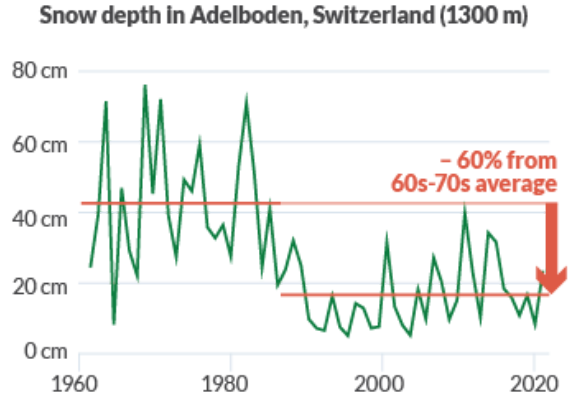
Rockfall was a relatively rare event and August was almost always an ideal month for Alpine climbing. A poor refreeze at night was only an occasional problem in the summer, up high. It's really different now.

Decreasing snow cover and changing ski seasons

The Alps are not only suffering from extreme heat, but also periods of drought. The duration of snow cover in the Alps is now 36 days shorter than the long-term average. Since the 1970s, Alpine snowpack has decreased by 5.6% per decade, and snow depth by over 8.4% [Carbonbrief, 2023].



Data source: [How climate change will hit snow levels across Europe's ski resorts](#) (Carbon Brief, August 2023) [Accessed 18/08/2024]

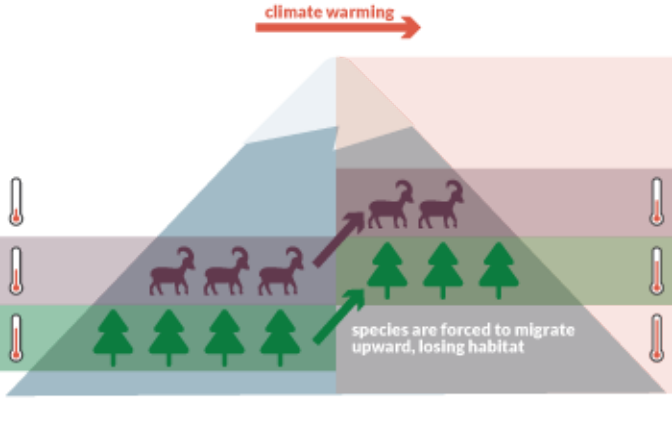


Data source: [Snow cover in the European Alps: Station observations of snow depth and depth of snowfall](#) (2021)

Species migration

Alpine flora and fauna are called “glacial relics.” They evolved to survive in conditions from the last glacial period. When the glaciers began to retreat around 10,000 years ago, alpine species retreated with the glaciers to mountain regions.

As temperatures increase and glaciers retreat, alpine species have to migrate higher and higher up the mountain in order to find cooler climatic conditions. Because mountains are conical, there is less land available at higher altitudes, meaning alpine species are steadily losing habitat and will eventually disappear.



The Rock Ptarmigan is at risk of losing 60% of its habitat by 2050 and could be extinct by 2090 [CREA, 2018].

Photo by Þorsteinn Friðriksson

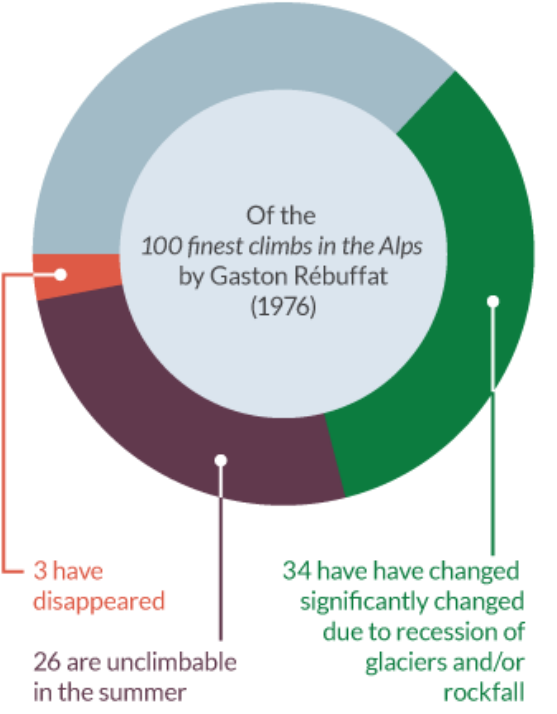
The glacier buttercup will have to climb 1,200 m by 2100 to find favorable climatic conditions. [CREA, 2018].

Photo by Alinja - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0

Melting permafrost and increasing rock fall

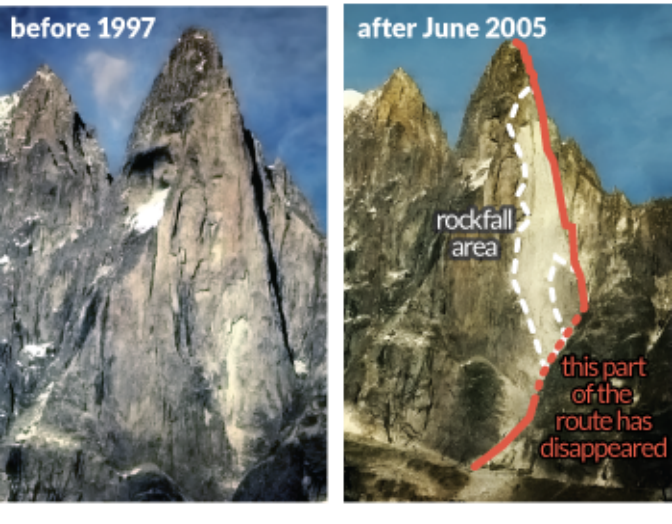
In 1973, the celebrated alpinist, Gaston Rébuffat, collected the 100 finest climbing routes of the Alps into a beautiful book that is found on the coffee table of every

alpine chalet. Just over 35 years later, three of these routes have completely collapsed and 26 are completely unclimbable in summer due to the increased risk of rock fall. Another 34 have changed drastically due to recession of glaciers and/or rockfall [Marcuzzi et al, 2019].



Data Source: Effects of climate change on high Alpine mountain environments (Arctic, Antarctic and Alpine Research, 2019)

While it is natural for mountains to erode and collapse over time, huge rock falls are becoming increasingly common in the Alps due to melting permafrost. Permafrost is permanently frozen ground (soil, rock and ice) that has remained at or below freezing for more than two years. It is widespread in Arctic and high mountain environments. Permafrost is the “glue” that holds the mountains in the Alps together—and rising temperatures are causing it to thaw out, often with dramatic consequences.



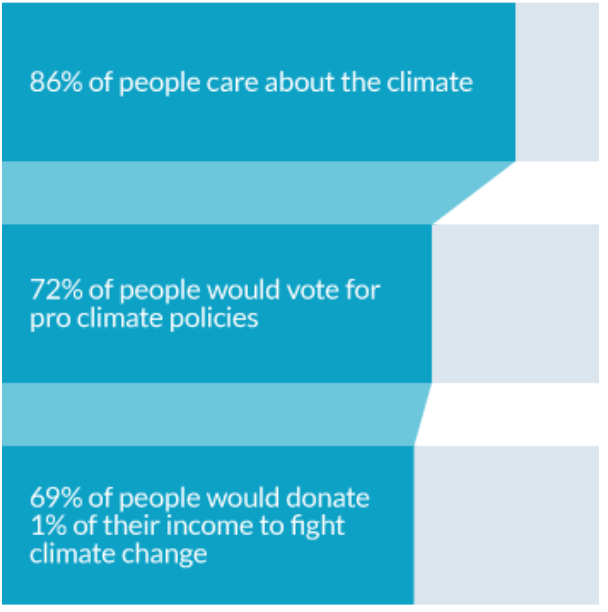
Collapse of the West Face of the Dru, Chamonix

SUMMARY

- Although most people around the world care deeply about the climate, we consistently underestimate how much others do.
- Cognitive biases often prevent us from believing our individual actions can make a real difference.
- Many of us are unaware of the most effective ways to reduce our carbon footprint.
- The top three lifestyle changes for the climate are going car free, not flying and reducing meat intake.
- Climate donations can have a huge positive impact on the climate, but it's important to donate to the right places.

Perceived problem: people don't care about the climate

> The majority of people in every country support action on climate, but the public consistently underestimates this share.
>
> *— Hannah Ritchie, data scientist for Our World in Data*



Source: More people care about climate change than you think (Our World in Data, 2024)

Global surveys show that 86% of people worldwide care about climate change across all countries and political persuasions. So if so many people care, why aren't more people acting?

1. People underestimate how much others care, leading to a sense of hopelessness.

Most people significantly underestimate how much others care about climate change. In a global study by Andre et al. (2024), 69% of participants across 125 countries said they would be willing to donate 1% of their income to fight climate change. Yet when asked to estimate how many others in their country would do the same, the average guess was only 43%.

The perception gap might be partly explained by the fact that people tend to be positive about themselves, but negative about other people they don't know. This is

often referred to as “individual optimism and societal pessimism”.

Sadly, it’s not only the everyday person who holds these biases, but also our political leaders. Politicians are therefore unwilling to push for ambitious climate policies because they don’t believe that people will vote for them—despite the fact that the majority of people do care.

2. The media focuses on the catastrophic consequences of climate change, rather than solutions, leading to “learned helplessness”.

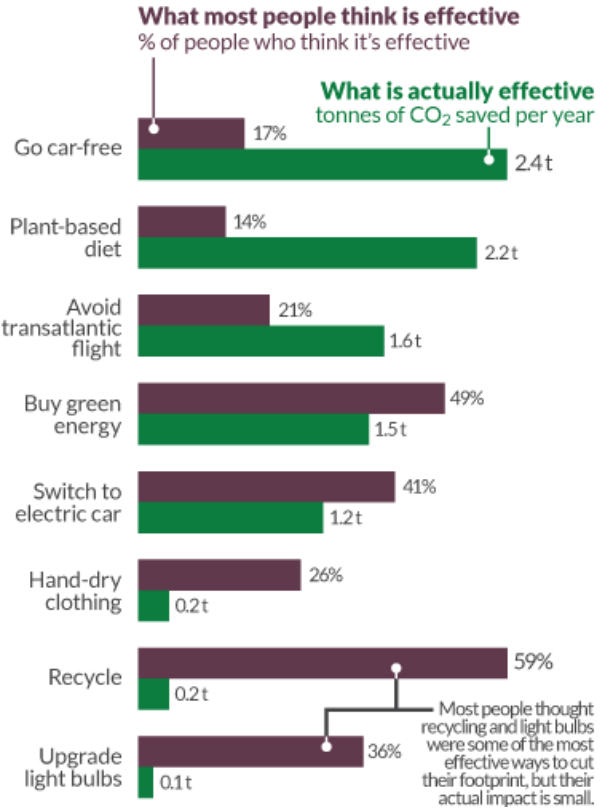
A recent study in Germany found that when people read constructive, solution-focused stories about climate change, they felt less helpless and were more motivated to take action. This suggests that shifting the narrative from the consequences of climate change to the actions we can take could play a powerful role in driving meaningful climate engagement [Sage Journals, 2025].

The actual problem: People don't know what's effective

As outlined in the previous section, our cognitive biases make us believe that we are alone in caring and 'doom scrolling' can make us feel that climate change is inevitable. However there are real concrete actions that we can all take to make a difference.

Unfortunately, there is a disconnect between what people perceive as effective

and what truly makes a difference, which can lead to our efforts being misdirected when it comes to creating meaningful change.



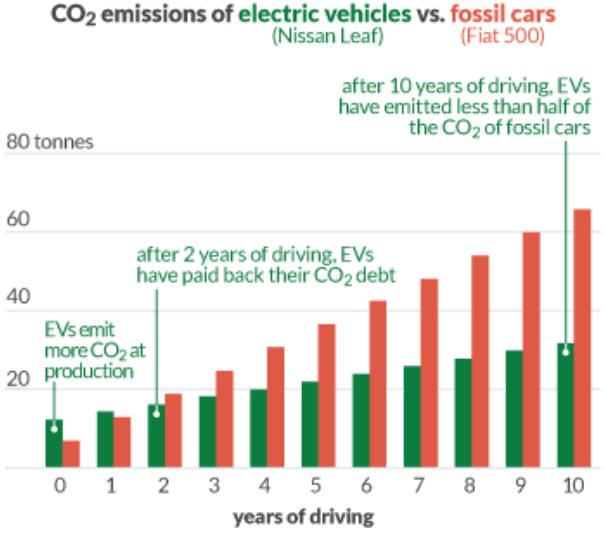
Data source: [*Hannah Ritchie*, Not the End of the World, *2024*]

When people are asked which actions they think are the most effective for reducing their carbon footprint, they consistently get it wrong. We only have so much energy to dedicate to a problem, and not knowing which actions are most effective can lead to us not prioritising the lifestyle changes that would really make a difference.

1. Going car free

If you own a car, the best thing you can do for the climate is to go car-free. If going car free isn't possible for you, switching to an electric car can make a huge difference.

As soon as you start driving, EVs start to pay back their carbon 'debt' quickly. In fact, after just two years of driving, EVs are already better. This gap grows year after year.



Data source: Sustainability by numbers, 2023

2. Reducing your meat consumption

Livestock farming contributes up to 20% of global greenhouse gas emissions [Nature Food, 2021] due to land-use changes, inefficient calorie conversion and methane released during animal digestion.

- For every 100 calories we feed a cow, we get just 3 calories of meat back in return; 97 calories are effectively wasted [*Not the End of the World*, Hannah Ritchie, 2024].
- Half of the world's ice-and desert-free land is used for agriculture. Three quarters of this is used for livestock - either land for grazing or for growing crops to feed it. [*Not the End of the World*, Hannah Ritchie, 2024].
- It takes 50 to 100 times as much land to produce a kilocalorie of beef or lamb versus plant-based alternatives [Poore & Nemecek, Science, 2018].

→ Switching from conventional beef to plant-based beef reduces land use by up to 96%

Data source: The Good Food Institute, 2025

→ If we created a global map of the different land uses—grouping each of them together—land for raising animals would take up the whole of North, Central and South America combined, from the top of Alaska down to the tip of Rio Grande in Argentina. [*Not the End of the World*, Hannah Ritchie, 2024].

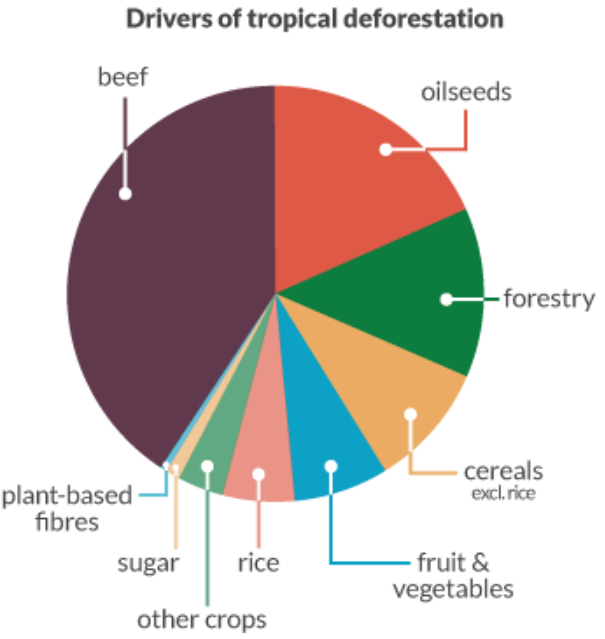
What you eat matters much more than *where* it comes from

But isn't it better to eat local meat than plant based alternatives shipped from far away?

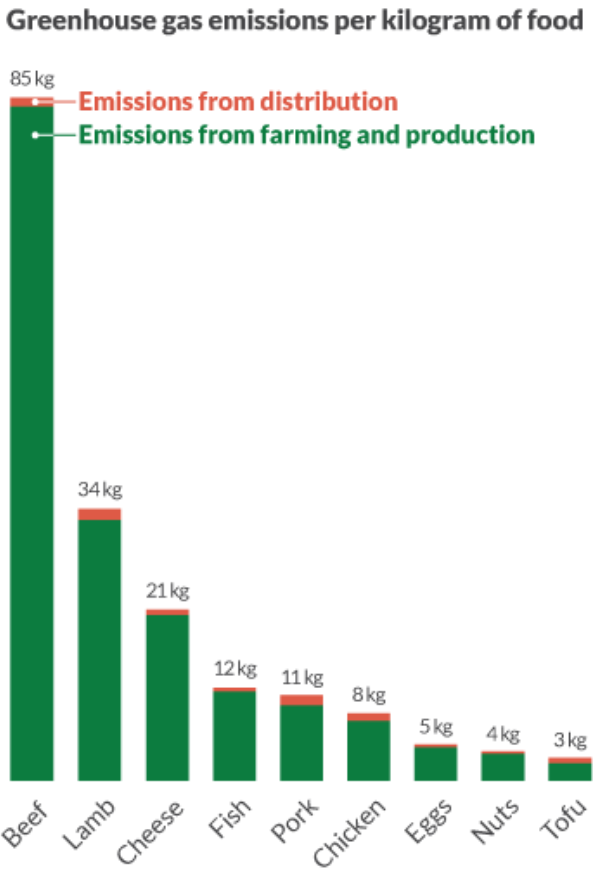
It's a common myth that a plant based diet is worse for the environment than eating locally sourced meat, often due to concerns about transport emissions and deforestation linked to plant-based foods, especially soy. But there are a few important points to consider:

- 76% of soy produced worldwide is used for animal feed, 4% for industry and 13.2% for vegetable oil, not for direct human consumption [Our World in Data, 2024].

➔ 41% of tropical deforestation is a direct result of beef production [Our World in Data, 2024].



➔ Transport makes up only 6% of all dietary emissions, while production of meat, dairy, and eggs are responsible for 83% [Science Direct, 2018].



Data Source: Our World in Data, 2020

3. Avoid flying

Avoiding flying is one of the most powerful ways to cut your carbon footprint. Air

travel burns large quantities of fossil fuels at high altitudes, where emissions have an even greater warming effect on the climate.

What if I need to fly?

You can reduce your footprint by:

- **Flying economy:** Causes fewer emissions because it uses less space per person. For example, a return flight from New York to London emits 1.12 tCO_2e (CO_2 equivalent emissions) in economy vs 4.47 tCO_2e in first class. [Future Tracker, 2023]

- **Flying direct:** Takeoffs and landings burn the most fuel, so non-stop flights have lower emissions than those with layovers.

- **Combining trips:** Bundle multiple purposes into one trip to reduce the number of flights you take.

Any tips on travelling overland?

For those looking to travel across Europe or beyond without flying, consider checking out The Man in Seat 61 or Rome2Rio for help planning your overland route.

Bonus: How to make an even bigger difference with your lifestyle choices

Dan Stein
Founder of Giving Green

> If you want to make an outsized impact with your actions, think, is this only reducing my individual carbon footprint or is it also contributing to the larger societal change?

Some lifestyle choices have a far greater impact than just your own emissions - they can help shift the entire system. Here's how:

- **Create demand for better options**
  Every time you choose the sustainable option such as buying plant-based meat, you increase demand. This drives down prices, improves availability, and makes it easier for others to make the same choice.

- **Accelerate clean technology**
  Buying an electric car doesn't just cut your own emissions—it helps scale up production, reduce costs, and signals to governments and businesses that charging infrastructure is worth investing in.

- **Be an early adopter**
  Choosing emerging climate-friendly technologies helps drive innovation and reduce costs for everyone. Solar power, for example, is now cheaper

than coal—thanks in large part to early adopters who helped scale up the industry and bring prices down for the rest of the world.

➔ **Vote for climate action**

One of the most powerful things you can do is vote for leaders and policies that prioritise bold climate solutions. Systemic change starts at the ballot box.

➔ **Use your influence**

If you inspire just one friend or colleague to adopt a climate-positive lifestyle, you've already doubled your impact. Inspire your workplace or company to take action, and that impact could multiply hundreds of times over. Your influence is one of your most powerful climate tools.

SUMMARY

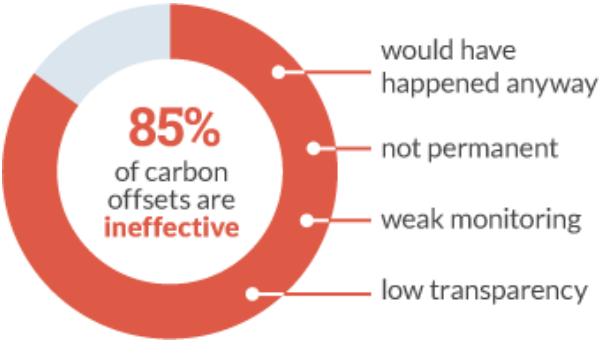
- Most carbon offsets fail—85% are ineffective or unverifiable.
- True offsets must be additional and counterfactual—most aren't.
- The very best charities are up to 100 times more effective than the average and so it's important to donate to the right ones to do the most good with your money.
- At Mieux Donner, we collaborate with climate experts at Giving Green to identify the most cost-effective charities working on climate change—those that prevent the most emissions per euro donated.
- The very best charities avoid approximately 1 tonne of CO_2 for every euro donated.

85% OF CARBON OFFSETS ARE INEFFECTIVE

Even those of us who live simply and consciously still produce some unavoidable emissions. So once we've reduced our footprint as much as we can, what's the next step?

The idea of buying back the emissions we produce is certainly appealing, but is it truly effective?

- ➔ Studies show that **85% of carbon offset projects fail** to deliver real results [Giving Green, 2022].



- Even **40% of UN carbon credits** don't hold up under scrutiny [New Humanitarian, 2023].

- There is no requirement for offsets to be independently certified leading to their effectiveness to be overstated and evaluated on limited evidence [Giving Green, 2022].

Why don't most carbon offsets actually work?

For a carbon offset to truly cancel out emissions, it has to meet two key conditions: it must be **counterfactual** and **additional**. Unfortunately, many offsets fail on both counts.

1. Counterfactual: "What would have happened without the project?"

Offsets only make sense if they lead to emissions cuts that *wouldn't have happened otherwise*. But that's really hard to prove.

Take forest conservation as an example: it only reduces emissions if the trees *were actually going to be cut down*. But in many cases, there's no real proof that was going to happen. Certifiers often rely on shaky assumptions, and developers have strong incentives to exaggerate the project's impact. So, a lot of offsets are issued to protect forests that wouldn't have been cut down anyway.

2. Additionality: "Would the project have happened without offset money?"

Let's say someone builds a wind farm… In some places, wind power is already profitable. That means the wind farm would've been built no matter what. Selling offsets in this case doesn't actually fund anything new—it just puts a "green" label on something that was happening anyway.

But in other places, a wind farm might *not* be financially viable unless it can also sell carbon offsets. In that case, the offsets

actually help the project happen—and that's when they're truly additional.

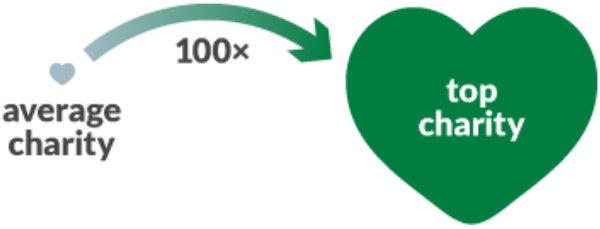
The problem is, it's often hard to tell which situation you're in. Developers want to sell offsets, so they might claim the money was essential to fund their project—even when it wasn't. And certifiers usually can't fully verify that claim.

WHERE SHOULD I DONATE INSTEAD?

Mieux Donner's top climate charity recommendations for 2025

It's better to decarbonise the future than offset the past.

Although the majority of carbon offsets are ineffective, it doesn't mean that there's nothing we can do. In fact there are some highly effective charities working to decarbonise the future and mitigate climate change, it's just important to choose the right ones.



The best charities are 100 more effective than the average. That means that while an average charity might save 0.1 tonnes of carbon emissions for every euro you donate, the top charities can save 10 tonnes with the same donation.

Charity recommendations based on thousands of hours of research

At Mieux Donner, we collaborate with climate experts at Giving Green to identify the **most cost-effective charities** working on climate change—those that **prevent the most emissions per euro donated**.

- We update our list of recommendations every year, based on thousands of hours of rigorous research.
- We're independently funded and take no cut from any donations made through our platform.
- Our top recommended climate charities for 2025 are Clean Air Task Force and Good Food Institute.
- We recommend these charities for one simple reason: the best available evidence shows they currently offer the most cost-effective way to fight climate change with your donation.

The charities we recommend have been independently verified to avert one tonne of carbon emissions for every euro you donate.

Data sources: Hannah Ritchie, *Not the End of the World*, 2024, Founders Pledge Climate and Lifestyle Report and Mieux Donner

Romain Barbe
Co-founder of Mieux Donner

When I talk about how effective organisations like CATF are, some people say, “Well, if donations work so well, I might as well keep flying, eating meat and doing what I want as long as I give money.” But that misses the point. The fact that donations can be so effective doesn’t mean we should give up on lifestyle changes and rely on giving alone. It’s not either/or. Our choices, like flying less or taking the train, also have ripple effects. They help shift norms, influence markets, and show what kind of future we want to support.

Really effective charities are in a position to make a much bigger impact than we can alone and our donations can support them in that. **Donating is an opportunity to do more, not an excuse for inaction.**

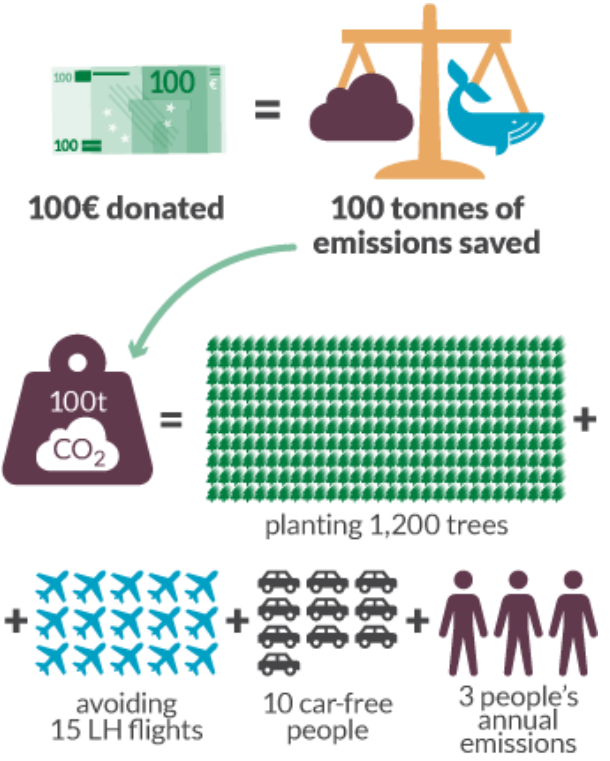
Top Charity Recommendation for 2025: Clean Air Task Force

A good example of a highly effective climate charity is the Clean Air Task Force. They are a non-profit that promotes policy and technology changes to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels. They have many impressive policy wins under their belt and worked closely with the European Commission to pass the landmark EU Methane Regulation last year. This legislation alone is expected to cut emissions equivalent to Germany's total annual output—every single year [CATF, 2023].

The Clean Air Task Force (CATF) has been independently evaluated by Giving Green to be one of the most cost effective charities you can donate to in order to make the biggest difference for the climate. Though the exact impact of a donation to CATF is difficult to quantify, Giving Green's research suggests that for every 1 euro donated to CATF, roughly 1

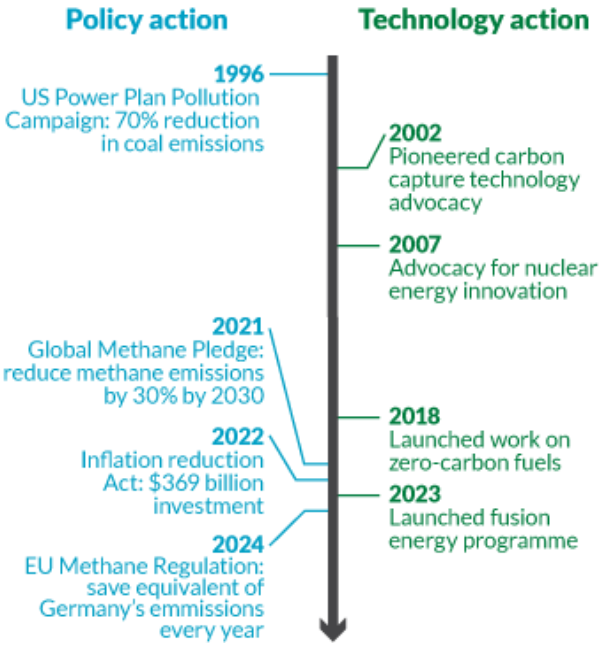
tonne of carbon is prevented from entering the atmosphere.

To put this into context, if you were to donate 100 euros to the Clean Air Task Force, your donation is estimated to mitigate 100 tonnes of carbon.



Data source: Giving Green *and* Mieux Donner, 2025

Successful policy changes driven by CATF



Data source: Clean Air Task Force, independently verified by Giving Green

How CATF is pioneering next generation renewable energy

CATF is not only pushing for ambitious climate policies, they are also pioneering next generation renewable energy. This is because replacing fossil fuels with

renewables would eliminate 3/4 of our global emissions [International Energy Agency, 2021]. CATF is working on renewables including; fusion energy, advanced nuclear and most importantly **super-hot rock geothermal power**.

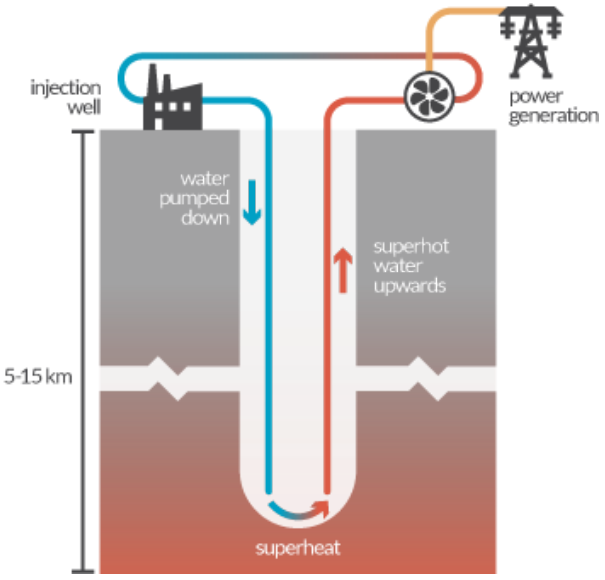
Case study: Super hot rock (SHR) geothermal

Super hot rock technology is a game changer for clean energy. In 2024, geothermal supplied less than 1% of global energy demand. However, as super hot rock technology becomes viable, it's estimated that geothermal could meet **15% of global energy demand growth by 2050** [International Energy Agency, 2023]

- ➔ Super Hot Rock (SHR) geothermal generates electricity like traditional geothermal by using steam from earth-heated water to drive turbines.
- ➔ Traditional geothermal is limited to regions with near-surface hot water reservoirs (e.g. Iceland).

- Advances in drilling technology now allow drilling up to 15 km deep, unlocking geothermal potential in many new areas.

- SHR geothermal heats water up to 400°C, producing 5-10 times more power than typical geothermal wells.



Top Charity Recommendation for 2025: Good Food Institute

Another example of a highly effective charity is the Good Food Institute, which supports the development of alternative proteins—including plant-based and lab-grown meats. Their goal is to create options that are just as tasty, affordable, and nutritious as conventional meat.

Given that reducing meat consumption is one of the most effective ways to lower our environmental footprint (as discussed in this guide), this strategy holds significant potential to cut global emissions.

If 22% of people halved their meat consumption, we'd save the equivalent emissions of 95% of aviation.

Data source: Boston Consultancy Group, 2022

If everyone halved their meat consumption, we'd free up land twice the area of India.

Data source: [Our world in data, 2021]

With reforestation and carbon sequestration, the freed-up land would mitigate 25% of current global emissions.

Data sources: [Hayek et al, 2020] *and* [Our World in data]

Why fund development of alternative proteins? Why not just promote a plant based diet instead?

Despite years of vegan advocacy, global meat consumption has tripled over the past 50 years [Our World in Data, 2023]. It's far easier to convince someone to eat a plant-based or lab-grown burger that tastes just like the meat they're used to, than to persuade them to overhaul their diet and start eating lentil dhal. This is why

supporting groups like the Good Food Institute is a highly effective way of reducing global meat consumption and thus global emissions.

Are alternative proteins healthy?

Before a product can be placed on the market, regulators rigorously check its nutritional value and safety. The GFI works with the European Union and various governments to ensure a robust, evidence-based assessment.

Impact of your donations on the climate

The Good Food Institute has been recognised by leading independent charity evaluators, Giving Green and Founders Pledge as one of the most effective organizations fighting climate change. Though the exact impact of a donation to The Good Food Institute is difficult to quantify, Giving Green's research suggests that for every 3 euros donated to GFI, roughly 1 tonne of carbon is prevented from entering the atmosphere.

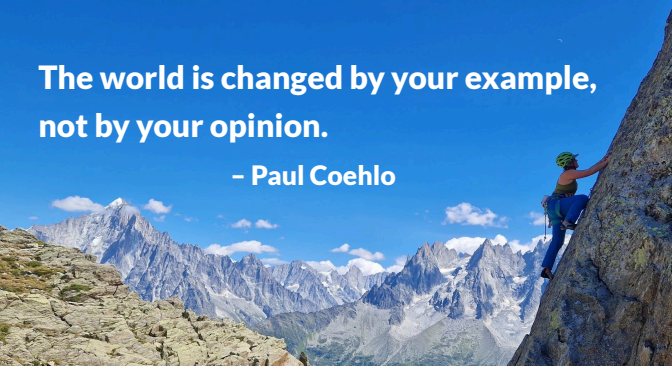
100 euros donated to GFI is estimated to avoid 33 tonnes of carbon emissions [Mieux Donner and Giving Green], approximately equivalent to 20 transatlantic flights.

Impact of your donations on factory farming

99% of animals in the US and 80% of animals in France are factory farmed. Donations to GFI are not only good for the climate, but GFI has been recognised by leading animal charity evaluator, EA Animal Welfare Fund, as one of the most effective charities to donate to in order to reduce animal suffering.

100 euros donated to GFI is estimated to save 530 animals from factory farming [Mieux Donner].

Donate to Good Food Institute



If you've been inspired by this guide, here are some ways you can amplify your impact and make a difference:

Share this guide with your friends and family by copying this link:

http://bit.ly/3ICqnuU

Subscribe to our newsletter

We hold regular webinars and events in Chamonix and Paris. You can keep up to date with these by subscribing to our monthly newsletter.

SUBSCRIBE

Implement some of the top lifestyle changes recommended in this guide

Donate to one of our top recommended climate charities

DONATE

Invite us to give a presentation at your workplace/online

We can deliver 20-minute to 2-hour workshops on effective climate action tailored to your needs. Presentations possible in English or French.
Example presentation: Evidence based solutions to match the scale of the climate crisis.

Know a business owner who cares about climate action?

A warm introduction goes a long way. If you have a friend or contact who runs a company and could benefit from expert, free climate advice, we'd love to connect.

Pledge for the climate

You've probably heard of Patagonia's 1% for the Planet Pledge that companies take, Did you know that individuals can take a pledge too?

There are over 9,000 people from 113 countries who have pledged 10% of their income to effective charities. The majority of these people earn the average wage in their respective countries but are motivated to make a difference.

If 10% is too much, you could consider a trial pledge of 1 - 10%.

Read more about the Pledge

Dave Searle

British IFMGA Guide and [Youtuber]

I decided to pledge 1% of my income to effective climate charities in 2024, after watching a presentation by Mieux Donner and realising how much of a difference even small donations can make.

The changes I've seen in the Alps over the past few years have honestly been quite scary—it really hit me how urgent this is. So making this pledge just felt right.

It's a small thing, but it feels good to know I'm doing something every month to help protect the mountains I love.

Rutger Bregman

historian and best selling author of *Utopia for Realists* and *Moral Ambition*

I'm really proud to be part of a movement of over 9,000 people who have chosen to take the 10% pledge. People who know my work will know I've always been quite sceptical about billionaires and their charitable giving. So it's really important to emphasize that this isn't a movement of millionaires and billionaires. If you have a median wage in a rich country, you're already part of the richest 3.5% in the world. To be honest it doesn't have to be a sacrifice, it's actually a situation where you're gaining something, because it just feels so good to know that you haven't wasted this money and it's working in the world right now to make the world a much better place. Maybe just start with 1% and see how it feels, I predict it will change your life.

Are you a business owner who wants to take climate action—but haven't found the time or don't know where to start? We offer free, expert consultancy to help companies move beyond net zero and take meaningful, lasting action for the climate. Our goal is to help you turn good intentions into real impact.

How we can help your organisation

- ➔ Help creating a bespoke effective climate action plan
- ➔ Workshops and presentations for staff and clients
- ➔ Climate content for your website
- ➔ Donation advice compatible with Patagonia's 1% pledge
- ➔ Bespoke climate impact reports with customer-friendly visuals

Why do you offer this consultancy for free?

Mieux Donner is privately funded by philanthropists who share our mission: **to do the most good possible for the climate**.

Our goal is to help individuals and organisations take **evidence-based, effective climate action**. One of the ways we do this is by offering free consultancy to help companies use their influence and donations for maximum impact.

By staying independent and impact-focused, we ensure that good advice—not profit—guides everything we do.

Get in touch

Sophie Nolan
Founder of Sidetracked Adventure

I finally feel confident that we're making a real difference. Knowing exactly what steps to take and how to align our business with climate actions has been a game-changer.

PART 8: FURTHER READING

This is a selection of our favourite resources on effective climate action.

Mieux Donner - Read our latest articles on effective climate action and the ways your donations can do the most good for the climate, human health and animal welfare.

Giving Green - The latest research from Giving Green on which charities do the most good for the climate for every euro you donate.

Our World in Data - Global data and research on the impacts of climate change.

Not the End of the World, Hannah Ritchie, 2024 - A definitive guide to climate action that cuts through the myths, delivers the facts, and leaves you inspired with real reasons for hope—and the tools to make a difference.

Climate change questions, Met Office - Answers to the most commonly asked questions about climate change and how we know it is happening.

Hannah Ritchie on why it makes sense to be optimistic about the environment (80,000 hours Podcast #160)

Johannes Ackva on unfashionable climate interventions that work, and fashionable ones that don't (80,000 hours podcast #148)

Effective Environmentalism - A broad community of people working on many projects with one common goal: maximise their positive impact on the environment.

GET IN TOUCH

If you have any questions about the guide, or would like to find out more about how you can make an impact for the climate—we'd love to hear from you!

info@mieuxdonner.org

or drop us a message on our website